



Department of Public Safety

Mitchell J. Brown, Director

Division of Fire

Ned Pettus, Jr., Fire Chief

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City of Columbus

Mayor Michael B. Coleman

Thanksgiving Fire Safety Tuesday, November 23, 2010

An estimated 2,000 fire occur each year on Thanksgiving Day in residential buildings with an approximately \$21 million dollars in property loss. The leading cause of Thanksgiving Day fires is cooking. Most of these fires occur in the afternoon hours between noon and 4:00 pm. The USFA suggests these safety cooking tips:

- Make sure you have smoke alarms on every level of your home, outside each sleeping area, and in every bedroom. Test smoke alarms monthly and replace them if they are 10 years old or older.
- Keep a close watch on your cooking. You should never leave cooking food unattended.
- Keep oven food packaging and other combustibles away from burners and heat sources.
- Heat cooking oil slowly and watch it closely; it can ignite quickly.
- Don't wear loose sleeves while working over hot stove burners - they can melt, ignite or catch on handles of pots and pans spilling hot oil and other liquids.
- Have a "kid-free zone" of at least three-feet around the stove and areas where hot foods or drinks are prepared or carried.
- Keep a lid nearby to smother small grease fires. Smother the fire by sliding the lid over the pan and turn off the stovetop. Leave the pan covered until it is completely cool.

Deep-fried turkey has quickly grown in popularity but safety experts are concerned that backyard chefs may be sacrificing fire safety for good taste. If you absolutely must use a turkey fryer, please use the following tips:

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials.
- Never use turkey fryers in a garage or on a wooden deck.
- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you do not watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer even if it is not in use. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot hours after use.
- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer.
- Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.

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- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water do not mix, and water causes oil to spill over causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.
- The National Turkey Federation (NTF) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator approximately 24 hours for every five pounds in weight.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. If the fire is manageable, use your all-purpose fire extinguisher. If the fire increases, immediately call the fire department for help.

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